Instructions for Completing SF-86 On-line

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requires all candidates, being offered positions of employment at U.S. government agencies or departments, to file their Questionnaires for National Security Positions (SF-86) on-line. To streamline the employment process, the Department of State asks that you fill out the SF-86 electronically, certify it, and print a copy along with the release forms.

<mark>DO NOT RELEASE OR SUBMIT THE SF-86 FORM AT THIS TIME.</mark>

Please bring a hard copy of the SF-86 and release forms to your Oral Assessment. If you pass the Oral Assessment, a Diplomatic Security investigator will review the SF-86 with you and indicate when you are ready to submit the electronic version. The release forms will also be collected by the investigator at that time.

Starting the e-QIP Application

Before you begin work on your SF-86, please thoroughly read and follow the instructions for completing the SF-86 to prevent any unnecessary delays in the processing of your security clearance request.

- To start work on your SF-86, go to the e-QIP web-site: http://www.opm.gov/eqip/browser-check.asp
- Once you click on this link, your web browser will be tested for compatibility with the eQIP application. Please follow the on-screen instructions if your web browser is not compatible, otherwise click "Continue".
- If you are directed to a page that says "Page Cannot Be Displayed," please go back to http://www.opm.gov/e-qip/browser-check.asp and follow the instructions pertaining to TLS (Transport Security Layer) next to the "Continue" button. Once you make this correction you should be able to access e-QIP.

Logging Into e-QIP

The e-QIP application sets up a secure connection to protect your personal information. To logon, you will provide your Social Security Number and answer three "Golden" security questions.

- **The very first time you logon to e-QIP**, you will need to register for a username and password. When you choose this option, you will need to provide your Social Security Number. Afterwards, you will be prompted to answer three default questions. **<mark>When asked for your city of birth, please respond with "Unknown."</mark>** You will be able to correct the response to reflect your actual place of birth after you enter the application. When choosing a username and password, please be sure to create responses that you will be able to remember as it often takes candidates multiple days to complete the form.

- **If you have previously used the e-QIP application**, you will be able to sign in using the username and password you created for yourself. Also, all of the information previously entered is still in the e-QIP system, and will be available for editing until you certify your current SF-86 form.

  Do not certify the SF-86 until you are certain that all information is current and complete. After certification you will still be able to log into e-QIP to release/submit your SF-86. **Do not release/submit your SF-86 until after you pass the Oral Assessment.**

If you encounter difficulty with logging into e-QIP, please contact FSOAQuestions@state.govand provide the following: your full name, last four numbers of your SSN, and your career track.

Completing Your SF-86

Be completely honest and forthright when answering all questions on the SF-86. If necessary, provide any clarification or explanation for how you answered a particular question in the comments or continuation section. When in doubt, provide an explanation.

Please list not only your current spouse, fiancé(e) or cohabitant of a romantic nature, but also any former spouse(s). Also include in-laws. You must provide your residential addresses for the last 10 years, do not leave any gaps in time. If you split your time between multiple residences during a time period, you must list all residences, not just the permanent address. You are not required to list temporary locations of less than 90 days that did not serve as a permanent or mailing address. If a residence was in an apartment complex, include the name of the complex and the unit number. If your name was not on the lease, then include the name of the individual who was on the rental or lease agreement. Also, include residences while in college.

Do not list education before your 18th birthday, unless it is needed for the two year minimum education history.

You must provide your employment history for the last 10 years, do not leave any gaps in time. List all full or part-time employment, in chronological order. If you had a period of unemployment or were a full-time student, list that as period of "Unemployment", along with reference information for someone who can verify your activities during that time. If the government or a large organization was your employer, identify the specific department, bureau, division, section, or unit where you actually worked.

Physical addresses, not post office boxes, are required so our Regional Security Officers can properly locate them.

If you have spent time overseas, provide references who are in the United States now and who can corroborate or verify your overseas activities. If necessary, this information can be added in the continuation section of the SF-86.

For question 14, for any foreign relatives or associates (if in doubt, list them), please also provide the following information either in the continuation section of the SF-86 or on an attached piece of plain bond paper that is submitted with your release forms:

a) the person's occupation,
b) current employer,
c) whether they now or in the past have worked for a government agency, police, security or intelligence organization, and if so, for which specific agency/organization and government(s) and
d) the types of contact you have with them (phone, email), as well as the frequency and date of your last contact.

(Also remember that the Supplemental Questions and the Supplemental Form for Public Trust Positions (SF-85P and SF-85PS) are needed, signed by the foreign spouse, foreign cohabitant, or foreign national. See http://careers.state.gov/resources/downloads, "What to prepare and bring to the Assessment Center (For Foreign Service Generalist and Specialist candidates)" to download forms.)

For male candidates, if you do not know your selective service number, you can obtain it by calling the automated system at 1-847-688-6888 or via their website at http://www.sss.gov. Include information for any prior security clearances issued. If uncertain of the type or date(s), at a minimum provide the agency that granted it.

Certify the document only when you are certain that all the information is correct and complete, and up-to-date. You will NOT be able to make changes after you certify the document.

Print an archival copy of the SF-86 and bring it with you. Print the release forms and bring them with you. Reminder: Your spouse, estranged spouse, fiancé(e), or cohabitant of a romantic nature needs to sign the DS-7601, Authorization to conduct Criminal History Inquiry for Spouse or Cohabitant.

Save the electronic document, which is available only to you until you release it into the system. If you pass the Oral Assessment, a Diplomatic Security officer will review it with you and then request that you submit it.

Not preparing the form in advance will delay the processing of your security clearance.

REMEMBER: the information is secure until you authorize release.

Oral Assessment passers will be fingerprinted on-site. It is not necessary to bring completed fingerprint cards.

If additional information must be submitted later, send it via Federal Express or UPS to: U.S. Department of State DS/SI/PSS-10th Floor 1801 North Lynn Street Arlington, VA 22209.

Do not use USPS mail since items will be returned as 'non-deliverable'.

Resolving Problems

If you encounter any problems while completing the SF-86, please contact the Office of Personnel Security and Suitability's Customer Service Center (CSC). The CSC is staffed Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays, from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM Eastern Time. They can be called toll-free within the U.S. at (866) 643-INFO (4636), or at (571) 345-3186. You can also email securityclearance@state.gov.